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ABSTRACT

The past, present, and future of vocational education and training (VET) in Belgium were examined. The examination focused on the following topics: Belgium's education system; VET for young people; continuing vocational training; financing of continuing VET; qualitative aspects of VET; training of trainers; and trends and prospects. The following were among the key findings: (1) although continuing training in Belgium is undoubtedly on the increase, participation by adults remains below the European mean and major inequalities exist from the standpoint of access; (2) training schemes organized and financed by employers chiefly benefit better qualified workers; (3) guidance and training are viewed as interrelated, with the aim being to encourage people to take a proactive attitude toward

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adapting their skills during their working lives so that they can progress or find new positions; (4) Belgium has 12,000 agencies working in the 8 main fields of training and offering 14,000 specific training schemes; (5) regulation of training is increasing; and (6) developing an evaluation culture for VET will require ensuring that available data are comparable and that all programs and measures implemented have clearly stated objectives. (Thirteen figures/tables are included. A list of acronyms and abbreviations and addresses of 13 useful organizations are appended.) (MN)

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Vocational education and training in Belgium

Brief description

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Brief description

Paul Cotton

Cedefop Panorama Series

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001

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Preface

In a number of Member States, it seems more appropriate to speak of "systems" in the plural rather than a single system of VET. This is particularly true of Belgium, where the education and training supply is shaped not only by the division of the country into regions and linguistic communities, but also by the large scale participation of private authorities (particularly the Catholic church) and the respective roles of a number of Ministries, in particular (but not exclusively) the Ministries of Education and Employment, at national as well as regional/community level. A vast array of options is therefore available for people looking for both initial and continuing education and training. This supply seems to be well used, as Belgium has a high rate of educational participation and good standards of education. What is less clear, however, is whether this range of activities is transparent and provides a set of complementary options that are relevant to citizens and in particular to people threatened by exclusion for various reasons and looking for post-compulsory education and further vocational training. To some extent, the system may seem to be driven by providers rather than by users.

CEDEFOP would like to thank the author of this report, Paul Cotton, of the Centre Psycho-médical-social (Centre PMS) in Ath and a number of other partners who helped us by providing additional comments. We are aware that some of our Belgian partners will be disappointed by this or that detail in the final publication, but we hope that we have managed to create a product that provides a useful overall view, in particular for an audience not familiar with the Belgian system(s).

Stavros Stavrou
Deputy Director

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Eleonora Schmid
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Project Coordinators

Thessaloniki
June 2001

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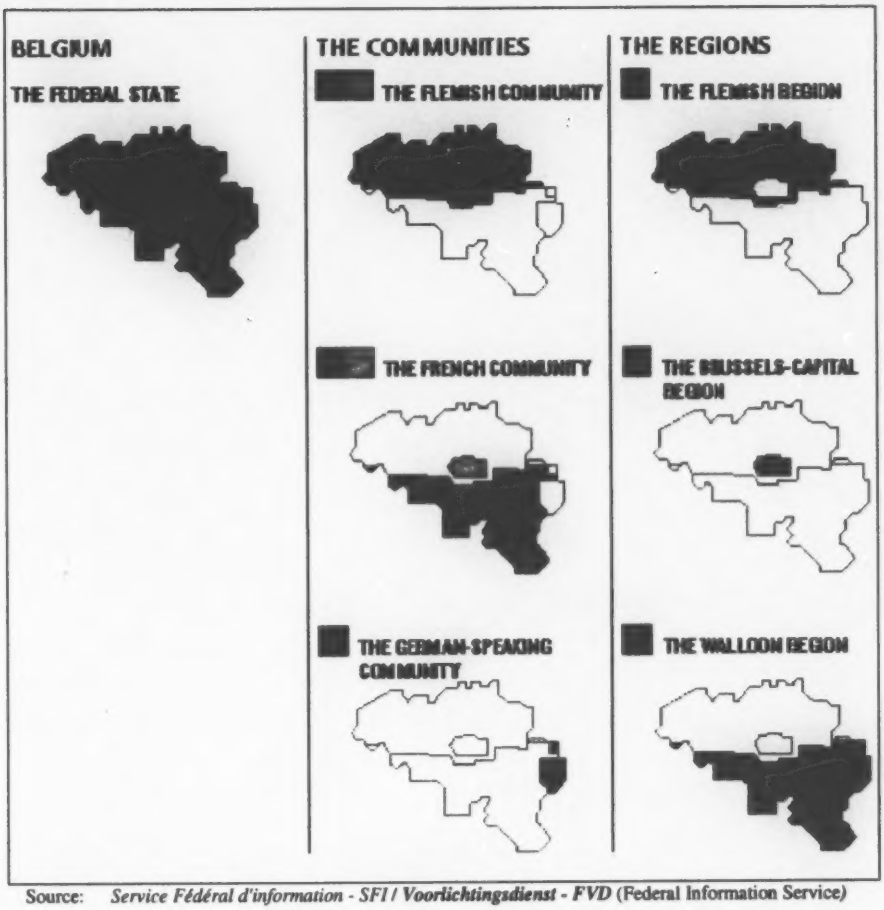
Figure 1: Belgium – communities and regions



Source: *Service Fédéral d'information - SFI / Voorlichtingsdienst - FVD* (Federal Information Service)

Belgium, a federal State

Introduction

Belgium was created as a unitary and centralised State in 1830. In 1988 it became federal. This development came about as a result of a number of divisions which have always been important factors in education in Belgium:

- the divide between the (Catholic) church and the State;
- school dynamics are linked to social issues (making education more democratic). Ideological and social tensions continue to play a part in education;
- the divide between the centre and the periphery reflected by the transition from schools creating national unity and identity ... towards centrifugal trends of developing a whole range of Community identities (affirmation of languages and cultures – Flemish, French and German – associated with separate territorial areas).

A federal kingdom with five levels of power

The five levels are:

- the national, now known as the federal,
- the community, based on language (three communities: Flemish-speaking, French-speaking and German-speaking). The Communities have powers over issues affecting the individual: culture, education, teaching, health, etc.,
- the region, based on geography (three regions: Flemish, Walloon and Brussels (which is bilingual)). The Regions have powers over the economy, employment, training, regional planning, etc.,
- the province (ten provinces),
- the commune (589 communes).

All these authorities have a Government and a Parliament.

Asymmetrical federalism

The Flemish Region (*Vlaamse gewest*) and the Flemish Community (*Vlaamse Gemeenschap*) merged their governments and parliaments in 1980. They therefore have common institutions.

Problems encountered

- The inhabitants of the – bilingual – Brussels Region come under one or other of the two main Communities. Powers and administrative divisions are continually changing, even today. This has led the *Cour d'arbitrage* (court), the federal arbitration court to deal with problems in specific ways.
- Processing of statistics, which is the responsibility of a whole range of departments and results in overlaps and statistics covering different periods.

- The financing of education, especially secondary education, may involve all five levels of government, but also enterprises.
- The financing of vocational training involves transfers of appropriations between the various public authorities.

Some key figures

Population (January 2000)		10.239 million
Active population (1998)		5.5 million
Public deficit, as % of GDP (2000)		0.0 (EU*: 0.3)
Public debt, as % (2000)		110.9 (EU*: 69.7)
Overall unemployment rate April 2001		10.6
	April 2000	11.0
Unemployment rate	Flemish Region (April 2001)	4.3
	Brussels Region	n.a.**
	Walloon Region (April 2001)	10.3
Employment rate	Flemish Region (2000)	63.9 (EU*: 62.1)
	Walloon Region (2000)	55.9
Youth (aged 15-24) unemployment rate (Eurostat 1999)		8.5 (EU*: 8.5)

*) EU: mean for the European Union
**) n.a.: not available
EUR conversion rate: EUR 1 = BEF 40.3399

Table 1: Population as at 1 January 2000

	Flemish Region	Walloon Region	of whom German-speaking Community	Brussels Region	Belgium
Belgians	5 646 601	3 009 669	n.a.*	685 705	9 341 975
Foreigners	293 650	329 847	n.a.*	273 613	897 110
Total	5 940 251	3 339 516	70 831	959 318	10 239 085
%	58 %	32.6 %	0.7 %	9.4 %	100 %
* n.a.: not available					

Source: Institut national de la statistique (March 2000) (INS)

Table 2: Employment by sector, 1998, as %

	Flemish Region	Walloon Region	Brussels Region	Belgium
Agriculture	2.4	2.6	0.2	2.2
Industry	30.3	24.5	15.1	27.2
Services	67.3	72.9	84.7	70.5

Source: Labour Force Survey, 1998

Table 3: Level of education of the population aged 25 to 59, as %

Level of education	Belgium
Higher	26.7
Upper secondary	32.8
Lower secondary	22.8
Primary or none	17.7

Source: Labour Force Survey, 1998

1. Description of the education system

Education is the responsibility of the linguistic Communities and is therefore organised in a decentralised way. The task of education is to develop the person and to help young people to acquire knowledge, to play an active role in economic life and to be responsible citizens in a free society.

1.1. Some specific features

Freedom of education and choice: the three main networks have Organising Authorities [*Pouvoirs Organisateurs* (PO) in the French Community and *Inrichtende Macht* in the Flemish Community]:

- the Ministry in the French Community (or *het Gemeenschaponderwijs*, i.e. an independent central council made up of elected members and representatives of the circles concerned in the Flemish Community), for the Community (formerly the State) network;
- the *Secrétariat général de l'enseignement catholique* - SéGEC (Secretariat General for Catholic Education) for the subsidised private or Catholic network;
- provinces and communes for subsidised official education.

Each network has its own education plan. Parents are free to choose schools. The Organising Authorities recruit teachers (paid by each Community) who can in practice move only within each network.

Table 4: Breakdown by network of school populations (basic and secondary), 1996/97, as %

Communities	Networks		
	Community	Subsidised private	Subsidised official
French Community	16	49	35
Flemish Community	15	69	16

Source: Ministries of the French and Flemish Communities

Compulsory education: from 6 to 18, although part-time education is possible from the age of 15/16 (see Section 2.2).

Education is free and organised on a co-educational basis thoughout compulsory education and in all networks.

Classes in five religions (Catholic, Islamic, Jewish, Protestant, Orthodox) *and lay education* are available in primary and secondary education.

1.2. Organisation of the education system: three main levels

1.2.1. Basic education

- Pre-school or nursery: three years from the age of 2 ½ to 5 (NB – almost all children attend school from the first year of nursery education)
- Primary: 6 years from the age of 6 to 12.

1.2.2. Secondary education

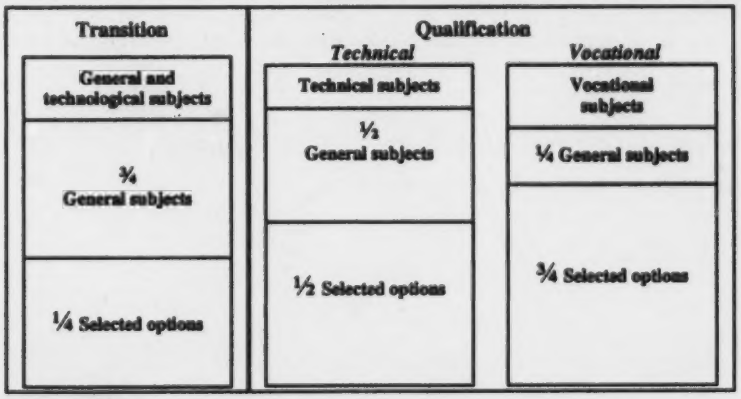
Secondary education, from the age of 12 to 18, includes three two-year cycles:

- an initial common (*gemeenschappelijke*) (Flemish Community) or foundation (*observation*) (French Community) cycle;
- a second cycle where education is organised in four streams: general, technical, art and vocational;
- a third two-year cycle (sometimes three years – a seventh class of secondary education is added – especially in the Flemish Community).

In theory there are bridges between streams; in practice, transition generally takes place in one direction: downwards as a result of failure. From the age of 15/16, students can attend alternance education (see Section 2.2). *Special education*, taking the form of eight types of education, is available for children and adolescents with physical, mental or instrumental disabilities. It is organised at primary and secondary levels. At the secondary level, students are prepared for social-occupational integration. *Pupil assessment* takes place within the class. Primary teachers are educators, assessors and judges. At secondary level, assessment and guidance are the task of the *Conseil de classe* (Class council) made up of the school's principals and class teachers.

Pupils obtaining the Certificate of Upper Scondary Education (*Certificat d'enseignement secondaire supérieur - CESS*) may enter higher education (university and non-university). In the Flemish Community, this certificate is called a "*diploma*".

Table 5: Breakdown of subjects between common and optional classes for each of the three streams of secondary education from year 3 (French Community)



Source : SIEP

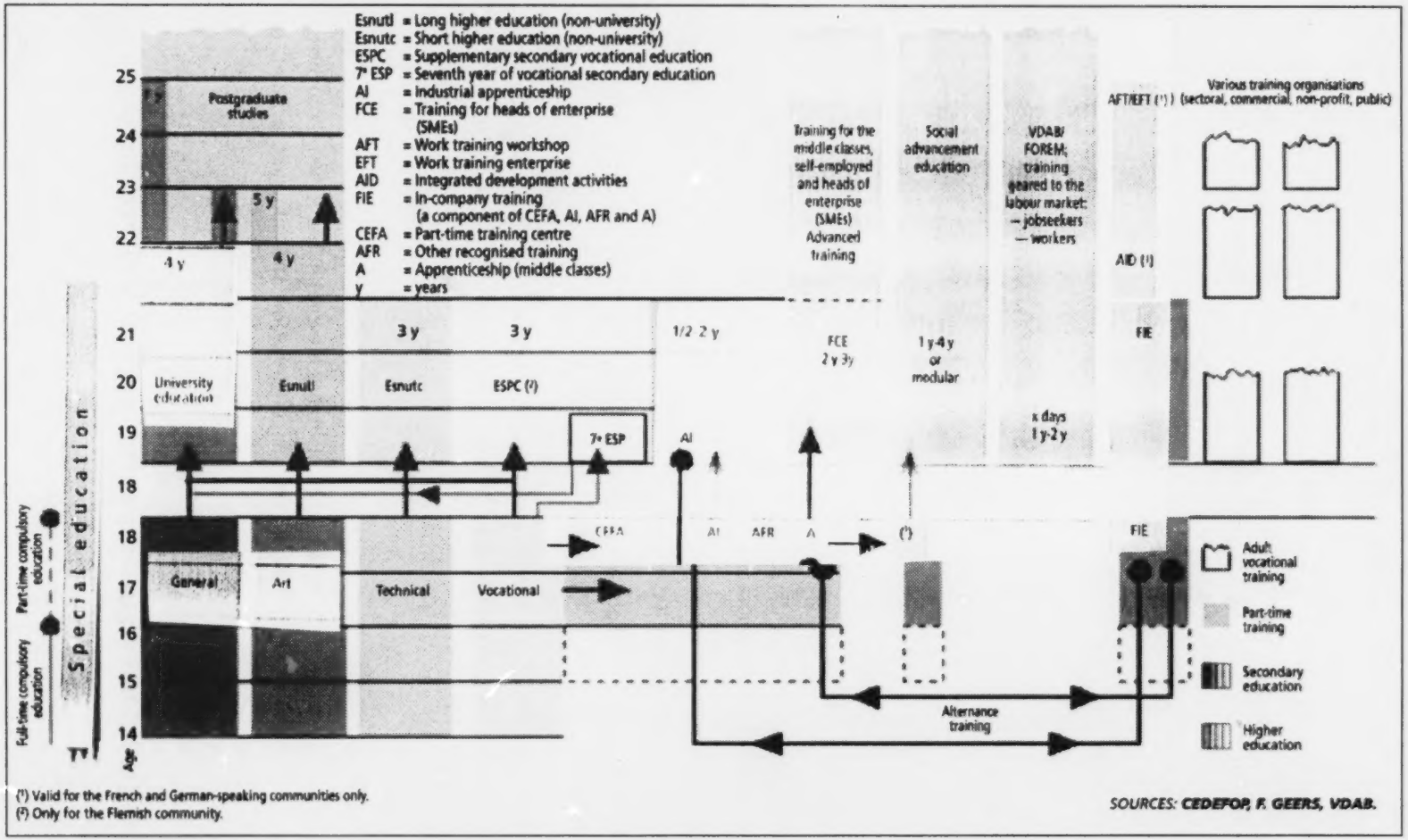

Esnutl = Long higher education (non-university)
Esnutc = Short higher education (non-university)
ESPC = Supplementary secondary vocational education
7e ESP = Seventh year of vocational secondary education
AI = Industrial apprenticeship
FCE = Training for heads of enterprise (SMEs)
AFT = Work training workshop
EFT = Work training enterprise
AID = Integrated development activities
FIE = In-company training (a component of CEFA, AI, AFR and A)
CEFA = Part-time training centre
AFR = Other recognised training
A = Apprenticeship (middle classes)
y = years
Postgraduate studies
University education
Esnutl
Esnutc
ESPC (2)
7e ESP
AI
CEFA
AFR
A
(1)
FCE 2 y 3y
1 y-4 y or modular
x days 1 y-2 y
Training for the middle classes, self-employed and heads of enterprise (SMEs) Advanced training
Social advancement education
VDAB/ FOREM: training geared to the labour market: — jobseekers — workers
Various training organisations AFT/EFT (1) (sectoral, commercial, non-profit, public)
AID (1)
FIE
General
Art
Technical
Vocational
Alternance training
Special education
Part-time compulsory education
Full-time compulsory education
Adult vocational training
Part-time training
Secondary education
Higher education
(1) Valid for the French and German-speaking communities only.
(2) Only for the Flemish community.
SOURCES: CEDEFOP, F. GEERS, VDAB.

Figure 2: Vocational education and training in Belgium

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1.2.3. Higher and university education

1.2.3.1.

Higher non-university education is of the short type when it includes one three-year cycle (*graduat*) and, of the long type, when it has two cycles over four or five years. High Schools are organised in eight streams (in the French Community) and 11 disciplines (in the Flemish Community). High Schools of the long type award *candidatures* and *licences* in the same way as universities. Higher education of the short type is geared towards the practical and prepares students directly for working life. The long type leads to advanced scientific and/or technological qualifications. Graduates holding the various types of higher education qualification are in competition and it would seem that those with qualifications from short higher education are better placed to find jobs. In the 1999/2000 academic year, High Schools were attended by 98 536 students in the Flemish Community and 59 982 students in the French Community.

1.2.3.2.

Universities: University education has three cycles:

Cycle 1: *candidature* (two or three years), a qualification which opens the door to university cycle 2 or non-university higher education of the long type.

Cycle 2: *licence* (two or three years with submission of a dissertation), a qualification which opens the door to working life.

Cycle 3: *doctorate* (several years with the submission of a thesis which is defended in public).

University student populations have been increasing for the last ten years especially in the French Community: 56 740 students in the Flemish Community (1999/2000) and 59 953 in the French Community (1998/99) .

1.2.3.3.

It is possible to move between the various types of higher education (short, long, university) subject to specific conditions. Universities have an information and guidance service, but High Schools do not.

1.3. Multidisciplinary guidance and medical welfare during compulsory education

Each network has its own services. Each Centre PMS (*Centre Psycho-médico-social* – Psychological, Medical and Social Centre) in the French Community is responsible for some

5 000 pupils. The CLB (*Centrum voor Leerlingenbegeleiding*) in the Flemish Community replaced the PMS in September 2000. A CLB is responsible for 12 000 pupils or an education catchment area. The PMS and CLB help pupils with their personal or school problems and tackle problems of truancy and addiction. They also offer guidance for pupils. They are responsible for preventive measures and health education in schools. These centres are independent from schools.

1.4. Guidance for young people and adults

The employment services in the three regions (VDAB, FOREM, the Office régional bruxellois pour l'emploi and Bruxelles-Formation) also offer opportunities for information, guidance and skill reviews. Non-profit-making associations offer information on trades, education and young people's rights: the information service on education and occupations (*Service d'information sur les études et les professions – SIEP*) and *Infor-Jeunes* (*Info Jeugd* in the Flemish Community). Belgium is also a member of the network of national vocational guidance resource centres (Euroguidance) of the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

2. Vocational education and training for young people

2.1. Technical and vocational secondary education

While most young people attend technical and vocational streams: 68.1% [57.5% in the EU (Eurostat)], these streams have less standing than general education. 15.2% of young people aged between 18 and 24 have left the education system after the initial cycle of secondary education [EU: 20.5% (Eurostat 1999)].

2.2. Alternance education

Alternance education accounts for a minority of young people: from the age of 15/16 after attending two years of secondary education.

It is organised in three ways:

- the alternance education and training centres (*Centre d'éducation et de formation en alternance – CEFA*) in the French Community, *Teilzeitunterichtszenter* in the German-speaking Community and *Centrum voor Deeltijds Onderwijs - CDO* in the Flemish Community. Students attend two days of classes at the centre per week and spend three days in an enterprise. In the 2000/01 academic year, 5 734 young people were attending this kind of education in the Flemish Community and 6 046 in the French Community, i.e. 4 to 5% of pupils in technical and vocational secondary education;
- the industrial apprenticeship contract (*contrat d'apprentissage industriel – CAI*) or *contrat d'apprentissage* (apprenticeship contract) for workers in employment;
- apprenticeship organised for the 'middle classes', i.e. self-employed occupations (with practical training, in trade skills, commercial training and training for service occupations).

CEFA and CAI populations are levelling off after a period of growth; the numbers of young people under "middle classes" contracts vary in different regions. Various conventions (employment-training and socio-occupational integration) have enlarged the alternance training population (up to the age of 25) and led to comparable or similar pay for young people with contracts under the three formulae (CEFA, CAI, 'middle classes') in the three Communities.

Table 6: Full-time and alternance vocational education and training

Authorities	Institutions	Target groups (age)	Structures	Locations
Community	School technical and vocational sections*	14 – 18	Secondary education	School + work experience
	CEFA**/CDO**/TZUC** and CAI **	15 – 18 18 – 21 21 – 25		Centre + enterprise
Region	Centre IFPME**/VIZO**/ IAWM**	15 – 18	IFPME / VIZO	Centre + SME
Region and Community	Joint Committee: Employers + trade unions CAI **	15 – 25	CEFA / VIZO CDO / TZUC	CEFA / CDO / TZUC + Enterprise

*) Full-time education
**) Alternance education or training

Source: Author

Key (See also Annex 1):

Walloon Region: Institut de formation permanente pour les classes moyennes et les petites et moyennes entreprises (IFPME – Institute for continuing training for the middle classes and for small and medium-sized enterprises)

Flemish Region: Vlaams Instituut voor Zelfstandige Ondernemen (VIZO – Flemish Institute for Small Business)

Brussels Region: IFPME for French-speakers and VIZO for Dutch-speakers

German-speaking Community: Institut für Aus-und Weiterbildung im Mittelstand (IAWM – Institute for further and continuing training for small business)

3. Continuing vocational training

3.1. Training operators

A *training operator* is any agency offering courses or work experience periods for an adult public.

Associations take the form of a whole range of non-profit-making institutions, whose common feature is that they work in direct contact with an adult population with few qualifications who are experiencing problems, including their occupational integration.

Continuing vocational training includes initiatives by:

- enterprise (employers' training schemes),
- authorities (training for civil servants),
- social advancement education,
- individuals [workers in employment, jobseekers or people on the minimum income (Minimex)].

Table 7: The three main pillars of continuing vocational training

	Social advancement education	Training and employment					Enterprise or sectoral initiatives
Operators	Schools of the three networks	Arbeitsamt IAWM	FOREM IFPME	VDAB VIZO	Bxl-F	Non-profit-making associations	Construction - Agoria (formerly Fabrimetal) - Textiles – Chemicals – Graphic arts - CPNAE (1)
Authorities	French Community, Flemish Community	German-speaking Community	Walloon Region	Flemish Community	Brussels Region	French Community Flemish Community	Federal

(1) CPNAE: Commission paritaire nationale auxiliaire pour employés (Auxiliary national joint committee for white-collar workers)

Paid educational leave (*Congé-éducation payé – CEP*) has helped to promote continuing vocational training FP.

3.2. Social advancement education

With its 650 or so different training schemes, its flexible organisation and its moderate enrolment fees, social advancement education *(enseignement de promotion sociale - EPS / onderwijs voor sociale promotie - OSP)* is the largest operator: 187 000 adults in the Flemish Community and 158 794 adults in the French Community (1999/2000). Together with secondary and higher education, social advancement education is the only agency able to

award recognised qualifications. It is organised at the same levels as secondary and higher education and offered on a part-time basis. Social advancement education involves a whole range of partnerships with the public and private sectors. Since 1991, training has been organised on a modular basis.

3.3. Public institutions: training and employment services and the middle classes

3.3.1. Training and employment services

- FOREM - *Office wallon de la formation professionnelle et de l'emploi* (Walloon office for vocational training and employment) in the Walloon Region.
- VDAB - *Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding* (Flemish Office for Placement and Vocational Training) in the Flemish Community and for Dutch-speakers in the Brussels Region.
- Bxl-F - *Bruxelles–Formation* (Brussels-Training) for French-speakers in the Brussels Region.
- the *Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft* (Employment Office of the German-speaking Community) has been responsible since January 2000 for placement in the German-speaking Community D.

These public institutions are managed on a joint basis by the social partners (employers' and trade union organisations) under the supervision of the Region concerned.

Table 8: Expenditure by training operators, 1988, 1995 and 1998 (in BEF millions)

	1988	1995	1998
VDAB	2 105	3 367	3 776*
Bruxelles-Formation	620*	805	856
FOREM	1 685	2 683	3 149
German-speaking Community	-	-	1.96
Total (in EUR millions**)	**4 410** (109.3)	**6 855** (169.9)	**7 782.96** (192.9)
*): estimate **) EUR 1 = BEF 40.3399			

Source: The financing of vocational education and training in Belgium, CEDEFOP Panorama, in preparation.

3.3.2. Middle Classes (IFPME – VIZO – IAWM)

The Middle Classes also organise two-year training schemes for people who want to set up their own businesses and become the head of an SME, as well as modular continuing and

further training schemes for heads of enterprise. Increasing numbers of people are attending these training schemes, especially in the Brussels Region.

3.4. Sectoral initiatives

At the outset, three sectors played a significant role: construction, Agoria (formerly Fabrimétal) and textiles. Growing numbers of initiatives have been launched in recent years in chemicals, printing industries, temporary work agencies, insurance, gas, electricity, wood industries and by the *Commission paritaire nationale auxiliaire pour employés - CPNAE / Aanvullend Nationaal Paritair Comité voor Bedienden - ANPCB* (Auxiliary national joint commission for white-collar workers).

CPNAE/ANPCB's members include 5 000 enterprises in several areas of activity. Under sectoral agreements, it has launched the ambitious formula of a peronal right to vocational training: two days per year, per employee, the content being decided by the employer. This has paved the way for training in very dynamic and booming small enterprises (52% of member enterprises).

Table 9: Components of an average training cost (as %)

Pay for trainees	58.1
Pay for training personnel	6.4
Pay for persons from outside an enterprise	30.5
Transport and allowances	3.6
Premises, equipment	1.4
Total	**100.0**

Source: Financing of vocational education and training in Belgium, CEDEFOP Panorama, in preparation.

3.5. Other training schemes

- Training schemes for disabled people.
- The CA/COISP - *Centres d'accueil, d'orientation et d'initiation socio-professionnelle* (Reception, Guidance and Socio-Occupational Integration Centres) for jobseekers are an integral part of FOREM and Bruxelles-Formation.
- Training schemes in agriculture (a few hundred people).
- Distance learning is declining in the French Community (12 000 people enrolled in 2000) while the number of trainees in its counterpart in the Flemish Community, *Begeleid individueel studeren (BIS)*, which is a component of a multimedia platform, is growing (48 882 in 1999).
- Literacy courses are attended by a very varied, but relatively small, population.

3.6. Guidance and then training: the *Carrefours Formation*

The Carrefours Formation have been set up in the Walloon Region at the initiative of the EU. Their purpose is to help people to obtain information and guidance before training. They are co-financed by the Regions and the European Social Fund (ESF). In the Brussels Region, they are financed from Bruxelles-Formation's own funds. Measures take the form of individual procedures and concern a broad-ranging public (workers in employment, jobseekers, groups at risk, disabled people). Operators set up a new kind of multi-partnership involving various public and private institutions and non-profit-making associations (see Table 10).

Table 10: Operation of the *Carrefours Formation* (Walloon and Brussels Regions)

Operators	Target groups	Access	Cost	Teaching	Organisation	Recognition	Integration
AWIPH	Disabled adults	File + Interview	Free	Individual Alternance	3 months to 2 years*	Certificate (AWIPH)	O-Q FS MàE
Social advance-ment (EPS)	Over 15	Education council	Enrolment fee	Courses Modules	Variable CEP	Attestation or recognised certificate	RàN-Q P-TàE
Work training enterprise (EFT)	18 to 30 Jobseekers on *Minimex* (subsistence wage)	CESI+ interview	Free	Courses Individual monitoring Work	6 to 18 months**	Certificate (EFT)	I-S-O-Q
FOREM Bruxelles-Formation	Adults Jobseekers Workers	Selection + test + interview	Free	Self-instruction courses Practical work	Maximum 1 year EPS ** and *	Certificate (FOREM)	I-O-Q-P-T
IFPME	+15/16	Entry exam + entry file	Enrolment fee	Alternance Individual monitoring	Variable	Certificate diploma (IFPME)	Q-P-I-O
OISP	Adults Jobseekers Those on *Minimex* with difficulties	Interview	Free	Life plan Individual monitoring	Variable **	Certificate (OISP)	O-S-Q

Source: Author
* travel costs
** allowances

Key:
CEP: Paid educational leave
I: Integration
O: Orientation guidance
Q: Qualification
FS: *formation spécialisée*, specialist education
MàE: *mise à l'emploi*, placement
RàN: *remise à niveau*, remedial education
P: *perfectionnement*, advanced training
TàE: *transition à l'emploi*, transition to employment
CESI: *certificat d'études secondaires inférieures*, lower secondary education certificate
S: *socialisation*, socialisation
Minimexés: person receiving a minimum wage from the public social welfare services

(see also Annex 1)

4. Financing of continuing vocational education and training

4.1. Complex federal system

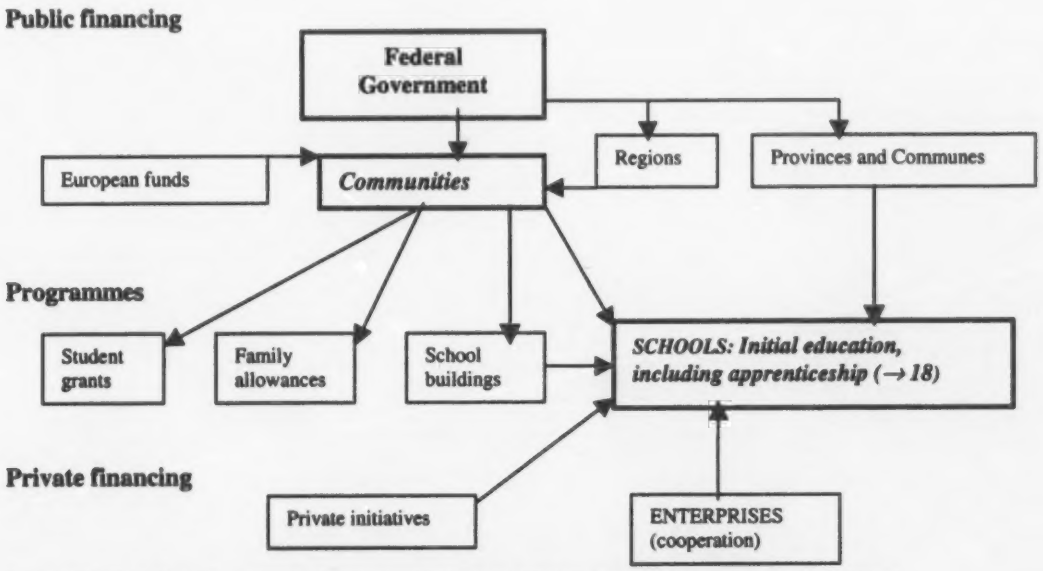
Since 2000, Community financing has come from two main sources: on the one hand, the whole of the radio and television licence fee and part of the revenue from personal income tax and, on the other hand, a proportion of VAT broken down according to strict criteria on the number of young people aged under 18 per Community. There are special financing arrangements for the German-speaking Community

Financing for the Regions comes from a proportion of the revenue from personal income tax. They may also collect their own taxation revenue (it should be borne in mind that the Flemish Region and Community have merged). Overall, the Communities spend less than 6% of their GDP on education and training.

4.2. Social security plays a significant role

Belgium is among those countries in which the family allowances paid by social security are the highest. They account for up to 37% of public expenditure on education per student.

Table 11: Financial flows in education



Source: The financing of vocational education and training in Belgium, CEDEFOP Panorama, in preparation

4.3. Training in enterprises

Under the 1999-2000 multi-sectoral agreement, the social partners undertook (at federal level) to bring Belgium to the same level as its three European neighbours (France, the Netherlands and Germany). For this purpose, the wage bill levy will be increased from 1.2 to 1.4%. Management is joint. Participation by enterprises in continuing training varies substantially from region to region: 13% of enterprises in Brussels, 63.7% in the Flemish Region and 22.5% in the Walloon Region say that they are trainers.

4.4. Funds: the Federal State as the main investor in continuing vocational training

- *The employment fund*: administered by the (federal) Ministry of Employment and Labour from contributions paid by enterprises, this fund covers risk groups, training for the unemployed and is also used to finance crèches and child-minding facilities. 1998 budget: EUR 36.4 million.
- *Sectoral funds*: administered on the basis of agreements drawn up jointly by sector. They are used for a whole range of purposes of which continuing vocational training accounts for only a small proportion. 1998 budget: EUR 37.9 million.
- *Employers' training funds:* administered by each enterprise depending on its needs.
- The State awards financial subsidies via the regional training agencies: FOREM, VDAB, etc.

Financing from the federal State: EUR 1 058 million.

Table 12: Funds channelled into employment policy (in EUR millions)

ORIGIN OF FUNDS	
European funds	40.96
Enterprises via the Employment Fund	141.24
Federal State subsidies	866.8
Reduction of employers' contributions	1 190.24
Total federal funds	**2 239.34**
+ Regional contribution	1 808.58
+ Community contribution	6.9658
Total available	**4 054.89**

Source: various statistical documents and the journal "Trends", 1998

4.5. Training in the public service

Most public services have a directorate or training unit or a specialist institute or college for their staff. Social advancement education can also organise "tailor-made" training schemes in the same way as universities.

4.6. Promotional initiatives by the public authorities

Congé - éducation payé (paid educational leave): concerns workers in employment. 0.04% of gross pay is channelled into the fund which is administered by the Ministry of Employment and Labour and by employers' and trade union organisations.

The *chèque – formation* (training cheque) (from 1 December 1998) in the Walloon Region: the Region administers the system and finances 50% of the cost of training, with the remaining 50% being financed by the enterprises.

4.7. Some striking figures

It is estimated that reception, guidance, social integration facilities and assistance for the unemployed absorb 70% of budgets, while actual vocational training accounts for 30% (at national level).

FOREM is managing 100 European projects.

5. Qualitative aspects

5.1. French Community

5.1.1. Vocational training re-organised for nine sectors by the CCPQ (1999)

The *Commission communautaire des professions et des qualifications - CCPQ* (Community commission on occupations and qualifications) is made up of representatives from education (all three networks), enterprise, teachers' trade union organisations, the National Labour Council and employers' organisations. The nine sectors re-organised are: agricultural sciences, industry, construction, hotels and catering, clothing, applied arts, economics, personal services and applied sciences.

The CCPQ has drawn up job profiles covering qualifications, training, structure and reference frameworks, assessment and steering. These relate to certification at the end of secondary education or its equivalent in the other education and training systems. The various concepts (standard job, function, activity and competence) have yet to be specified.

5.1.2. Technical and vocational secondary education soon by alternance

In April 2001, the government of the French Community adopted a preliminary draft Decree law on secondary education by alternance. All education outside the general stream will include periods of work experience in enterprise.

5.1.3. Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation - CEF (Education and Training Council)

This council, with two chambers (education and training), is an important think-tank and issues numbered opinions. It is stressing the need to develop an integrated and coherent system by which competences can be validated for lifelong vocational training.

5.1.4. Overhaul of FOREM

In the Walloon Region, the Walloon government is preparing a decree overhauling FOREM and dividing it into two separate areas:

- the public employment and vocational training service (administration/design, employment and vocational training, common management services, etc.);

- the public limited company (recruitment and selection consultancy, placement services), i.e. for all matters for which payment is made.

5.1.5. Technological innovation centres (PITech)

These information, documentation and training centres are intended to forge closer cooperation ties between the worlds of education and enterprise.

5.2. Flemish Community

5.2.1. Training profiles

The *Vlaams Onderwijs Raad - VLOR* (Flemish Education Council) draws up training profiles from the qualification profiles produced by the *Sociaal Economische Raad van Vlaanderen - SERV* (Economic and Social Council of Flanders), which is a body made up of agencies concerned by vocational training.

5.2.2. Lifelong education and training

The aim is to help everyone to learn to learn from the very beginning of their education. The Flemish Community is encouraging core competences to be integrated at all levels. New learning pathways are intended to pave the way for more flexible and differentiated training streams.

5.2.3. In secondary education, a programme of vocational training modules

This ambitious and vast operation launched in September 2000 will continue until 2006. Its purpose is to ensure consistency between initial education and continuing vocational training. It involves all the social partners as well as other training agencies such as VIZO and VDAB. The Flemish Community is working to develop qualification and certification procedures as well as procedures for the recognition on an equivalent footing of people's acquired competences. Under a 1999 decree on adult education and training, maximum coordination is to be sought between the various forms and levels of education.

5.2.4. Practical experience of work

There are now more opportunities for teachers and trainers to upgrade their skills through better contacts with the world of enterprise.

5.3. Information and communication technologies (ICTs)

The ICTs are integrated into learning from basic education onwards. There has been investment in the ICTs (cyber-schools) in both Communities.

6. Training of trainers

6.1. Teachers' initial training

This training is provided by the High Schools (short higher education in teaching, three years) for teachers in the first cycle of secondary education (called "*régents*"), or by universities for teachers in cycles 2 and 3 of secondary education and in short higher education.

University graduates (*licenciés*) from the second cycle obtain an *agrégation* (after attending courses in educational subjects and a period of work experience which ends with the presentation of lessons). Once in possession of the *agrégation*, they can teach in upper secondary education.

Most teachers for technical and vocational classes are trained in social advancement education and attend normal technical courses of the short type (maximum of three years). They generally come from industry or from the self-employed sector.

6.2. FOREM and VDAB training for trainers

These institutions organise training for their instructors, via *Spoor 21* in the case of VDAB and the training of trainers unit at the headquarters of FOREM.

6.3. Training of social advancement instructors and experts

Social advancement education recruits teachers with educational training of the short or long higher education or university type, as well as experts from industry or the public service .

6.4. Teachers and trainers at IFPME, VIZO and IAWM

There are two groups: conventional teachers and trainers or tutors trained in the institution. The latter must have occupational experience in the occupational sector in which they teach.

6.5. Teachers' continuing training

Each Community and each network within the Community organises continung training (educational freedom of the networks).

7. Trends and prospects

7.1. Trends

While continuing training is undoubtedly on the increase, participation by adults is below the European mean and there are major inequalities from the point of view of access. Sectoral agreements should help to make training in enterprise more dynamic [construction, Agoria (formerly metalworking), insurance, gas, electricity, wood industries and printing industries]. Training schemes organised and financed by employers chiefly benefit the better qualified (managers: 45%, white-collar workers: 41%, manual workers: 15%).

7.2. Guidance and training: part of the same problem

Guidance and training are part of the same problem. The aim is to encourage people to take a proactive attitude towards adapting their skills during their working lives so that they can progress or find new positions during their careers.

For some years there have been skill shortages in terms of both quality and quantity. There are ongoing needs for continuing training for everyone – white-collar and blue-collar workers – and short-term solutions, such as work experience periods, need to be found. In the long term, education and industry will need to work together to set up realistically oriented education.

Lastly, in the area of guidance and information on occupations, serious work needs to be done to change the attitudes of young people and adults, in particular towards self-employment.

7.3. Action

Belgium has 12 000 agencies working in the eight main fields of training and offering 14 000 specific training schemes. Enterprises and the public service need training schemes to keep the basic competences of their staff up to date and also to give them new ones. These training schemes should be as short as possible

Risk groups, jobseekers and in particular young people require social assistance such as the *Rosetta* plan (federal plan offering young people help in finding their first jobs). Equal access to vocational training must be ensured so that everyone has a genuine second chance in society.

7.4. Regulating the supply and improving the quality of training

Training is being increasingly regulated. It can be stimulated by initiatives by the European institutions, the federal State, the Regions, the Communities and the social partners. Rules common to all the various training operators need to be introduced. Partnerships for concerted action such as the CCPQ and ESF monitoring committees are needed to ensure that *everyone* takes responsibility for "*employability*" and for sustainable improved quality in vocational training.

7.5. Developing an evaluation culture

This is necessary to ensure the comparability of data and to evaluate the efficiency of systems and it means that any programme or measure implemented must have clearly stated objectives. It must be possible to pinpoint which objectives have been achieved at the end of each period. It is therefore necessary to be able to measure objectives and this requires the design of measurement tools which also provide food for thought about training, which is an indispensable value added of the European economy.

Annex 1

Acronyms and abbreviations

AFT:	*Atelier de formation par le travail (Région wallonne)* Work training workshop (in the Walloon region)
AWIPH:	*Agence wallonne pour l'intégration des personnes handicapées* *Vlaams Fonds voor Sociale Integratie van Personen met een Handicap (VFSIPH)* Walloon/Flemish Agency for the integration of disabled people
BEV	*Betaald educatief verlof* *Congé-éducation payé (CEP)* Paid educational leave
BIS	*Begeleid Individueel Studeren* *Enseignement à distance (e à d)* Distance learning
Bxl-F	*Bruxelles-Formation* (Brussels Region) Brussels-Training
CAI:	*Contrat d'apprentissage industriel* Industrial apprenticeship contract
CCPQ:	*Commission communautaire des professions et des qualifications* Community commission on occupations and qualifications
CEB	*Certificat d'étude de base (certification: primaire)* Basic education certificate (primary certificate)
CEF	*Conseil de l'éducation et de la formation* Education and training council
CEFA:	*Centre d'éducation et de formation en alternance* *Centrum voor Deeltijds Onderwijs (CDO)* Alternance education and training centre
Centre PMS	*Centre psycho-médical-social* *Centrum voor Leerlingenbegeleiding (CLB)* Psychological, medical and social centre
CEP:	*Congé éducation payé* *Betaald educatief verlof (BEV)* Paid educational leave

CES2D:	*Certificat d'étude du 2eme degré* Certificate of cycle 2 education (4th year of education)
CESI:	*Certificat d'enseignement secondaire inférieur* Lower secondary education certificate
CESS:	*Certificat d'enseignement secondaire supérieur* Upper secondary education certificate
CISP	*Convention d'insertion socio-professionnelle* Socio-occupational integration agreement
COISP	*Centre d'orientation et d'initiation socio-professionnelle* Guidance and socio-occupational induction centre
CPAS	*Centre public d'aide sociale* Public social welfare centre
CPNAE	*Commission paritaire nationale auxiliaire pour employés* *Aanvullend Nationaal Paritair Comité voor Bedienden (ANPCB)* Auxiliary national joint committee for white-collar workers
EAD	*Enseignement à distance* *Begeleid Individueel Studeren (BIS)* Distance learning
EFT:	*Entreprise de formation par le travail (Région wallonne)* Work training enterprise (in the Walloon region)
EPS	*Enseignement de promotion sociale (PromSoc)* *Onderwijs voor sociale promotie (OSP)* Social advancement education
ESF:	European Social Fund
FOREM:	*Office wallon de la formation professionnelle et de l'emploi* Walloon office for vocational training and employment
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IFPME:	*Institut de formation permanente pour les petites et moyennes entreprises* Continuing training institute for small and medium-sized enterprises
INS:	*Institut national de statistiques* *Nationaal Instituut voor Statistiek (NIS)* National statistical institute
OISP:	*Organisme d'insertion socio-professionnelle (Région de Bruxelles-Capitale)* Socio-occupational integration agency (Brussels Region)

ONEM:	*Office national de l'emploi* *Rijksdienst voor Arbeidsvoorziening (RVA)* National Employment Office
ORBEM:	*Office regional bruxellois de l'emploi* Brussels region employment office
OSP	*Onderwijs voor sociale promotie* *Enseignement de promotion sociale (EPS)* Social advancement education
SéGEC	*Secrétariat Général de l'Enseignement Catholique* Secretariat general for catholic education
SIEP:	*Service d'information sur les études et les professions* Information service on education and occupations
VDAB	*Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding* Flemish office for placement and vocational training
VIZO	*Vlaams Instituut voor het Zelfstandig Ondernemen* Flemish institute for small business

Annex 2

Useful addresses

A. Ministries

Ministère de la Communauté française
Administration générale de l'enseignement et de la recherche scientifique
Direction Générale de l'Enseignement obligatoire
Rue Royale, 204
B-1040 Bruxelles
Tel.: (32) 02.213.59.11
Fax: (32) 02 213 59 90
Internet: http://www.agers.cfwb.be

Ministère de la Communauté française
Administration générale de l'enseignement et de la recherche scientifique
Direction Générale de l'Enseignement non-obligatoire et de la recherche scientifique
Rue Royale, 204
B-1000 Bruxelles
Tel.: (32) 02.210.55.11
Fax: (32) 02 210 55 17
Internet: http://www.agers.cfwb.be

Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap
Departement Onderwijs
Administratie Secundair Onderwijs
Koning Albert II Laan, 15
B-1210 Brussel
Tel.: (32) 02.553.86.11
Fax: (32) 02 553 89 05
Internet: http://www.intranet.ond.vlaanderen.be

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Departement Onderwijs
Administratie Permanente Vorming
Koning Albert II Laan, 15
B-1210 Brussel
Tel.: (32) 02.553.86.11
Fax: (32) 02 553 89 05
Internet: http://www.intranet.ond.vlaanderen.be

Ministère fédéral de l'emploi et du travail
Rue Belliard, 51
B-1040 Bruxelles
Tel.: (32) 02.233.41.11
Fax: (32) 02 233 44 88
Internet: http://www.meta.fgov.be

Ministerium des Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft
Gospert 1-5
B-4700 EUPEN
Tel.: (32) 087 59 63 00
Fax: (32) 087 55 64 75
Internet: http://www.dglive.be

B. Regional organisations

FOREM (Office communautaire et régional de la formation professionnelle et de l'emploi)
Administration Centrale
Boulevard Tirou, 104
B-6000 Charleroi
Tel.: (32) 071 20 61 11
Fax: (32) 071 20 61 98
Internet: http://www.forem.be

IFPME (Institut de formation permanente pour les classes moyennes et les petites et moyennes entreprises)
Avenue des Arts 39
B-1040 Bruxelles
Tel.: (32) 02 502 76 00
Fax: (32) 02 505 47 70
Internet: http://www.efpme.be

Bruxelles-Formation
Avenue Louise 166
B-1050 Bruxelles
Tel.: (32) 02 626 78 11
Fax: (32) 02 626 78 14

VDAB (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding)
Keizerlaan, 11
B-1000 Brussel
Tel.: (32) 02.506.15.11
Fax: (32) 02 504 04 28
Internet: http://www.vdab.be

VIZO (Vlaams Instituut voor Zelfstandig Ondernemen)
Kanselarijstraat, 19
B-1000 Brussel
Tel.: (32) 02.227.63.93
Fax: (32) 02 217 46 12
Internet: http://www.vizo.be

C. Other

FEB (Fédération des entreprises de Belgique)
VBO (Verbond van Belgische Ondernemingen)
Rue Ravenstein 4
B-1000 Bruxelles
Tel.: (32) 02 515 08 11
Fax: (32) 02 515 09 00
Internet: http://www.feb.be

SIEP (Service d'information sur les etudes et les professions)
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Internet: http://www.siep.be

Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)

Vocational education and training in Belgium: brief description

Paul Cotton

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This brief document describes the vocational education and training (VET) systems in Belgium. It provides some basic data about administrative responsibilities in Belgium and the Belgian labour force. There is information on the structure of the general education and then the initial and continuing VET systems. Attention is focussed on systems which provide training in the work place as well as in education centres. Short sections on financing VET and on specific aspects like training of trainers and certification are also included. The document concludes with some thoughts on future perspectives. Throughout, an attempt is made to take account of the wide variety of education and training structures and opportunities, which results from the federal nature of the Belgian state and the many organisations and bodies involved in VET provision.

Paul Cotton

Vocational education and training in Belgium

Brief description

PANORAMA

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